

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/482330-court-orders-interim-forfeiture-of-abidemi-rufais-homes-bank-accounts.html>



Court orders interim forfeiture of Abidemi Rufai's homes, bank accounts

The EFCC says it is investigating Abidemi Rufai, a suspended aide of Ogun State governor, in collaboration with the United States' Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

By [Agency Report August 31, 2021](#)

The Federal High Court in Lagos, Tuesday, ordered the interim forfeiture of funds and assets linked to Abidemi Rufai, who is facing fraud charges in the United States.

Mr Rufai who has been in detention in the U.S. is a suspended aide of Governor Dapo Abiodun of Ogun State.

His assets affected by Tuesday's interim forfeiture order, according to The [Nation newspaper's report](#), includes: House 11, Omodayo Awotuga Street, Bera Estate, Chevy View, Lekki, Lagos and funds in his accounts with two banks.

The newspaper reports that the judge, Tijjani Ringim, issued the order following ex parte application by the Economic and Financial Crimes (EFCC).

"I am satisfied by the averment in the affidavit deposed to by Usman Abdulhamid and the legal submission of the counsel that this application should succeed and same is accordingly granted as prayed," the judge ruled.

The judge ordered the EFCC to advertise the order in newspapers within 14 days from Tuesday for any interested party to show cause why the funds and assets should not be permanently forfeited to the federal government.

He then adjourned the case till December 1, 2021, for interested parties to show cause.

Investigations

Arguing the ex parte application for interim forfeiture, EFCC's lawyer, Ebuka Okongwu, said the commission's request was necessitated by the need to preserve assets and prevent their dissipation.

Mr Rufai and his firm, Omo Mayodele Global Investment, were respondents in the application.

An affidavit filed in support of the application noted that EFCC was investigating Mr Rufai in collaboration with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Usman Abdulhamid, EFCC's investigator who deposed to the affidavit, stated Mr Rufai had already removed N29.37 million from three of his targeted accounts in tranches.

According to the affidavit, the EFCC investigated Mr Rufai's sources of income and bank accounts, with findings showing that on March 19, 2020, there was an inflow of N4.5 million.

It added that there were various subsequent transactions on the account which were all dissipated to his GTB account on the same day of the inflow.

"Further analysis revealed that prior to the first inflow on March 19, 2020, the 1st respondent's account rarely receives such traffic and huge inflows.

"Upon proactive investigative method of asset tracking and recovery conducted by the Commission, it was revealed that the 1st Respondent owns a property located at HOUSE 11. OMODAYO AWOTUGA STREET, BERA ESTATE, CHEVY VIEW, LEKKI, LAGOS, NIGERIA," it said.

The EFCC added that it wrote various letters to various financial institutions, agencies and related regulatory bodies, some of the responses of which are still being awaited.

U.S. trial

Mr Rufai was **arrested** in the Eastern District of New York while trying to jet out of the country on May 24.

Judge Benjamin Settle of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington, at Tacoma, on June 25, **adjudged him to represent a flight risk**, and ordered he should be attending his trial from jail.

The Nigerian politician who has been in detention since his arrest is accused of using the identities of more than 100 Washington residents to **steal more than \$350,000 in unemployment benefits** from the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) during the COVID-19 pandemic last year.

He is said to have **bypassed** security systems at the Washington ESD using a simple feature of Google's free Gmail service.

PREMIUM TIMES reported exclusively that Mr Rufai's trial has been postponed to 2022.

The trial earlier scheduled to commence on August 31, has now been postponed to February 1, 2022, by the order of the court.

Mr Settle's order changing the trial date is based on agreement between the prosecution and the defence, both of whom have described the case as "unusual and complex".

With about 97,000-page material already filed by the U.S. government as evidence against Mr Rufai, both parties admit that more time is needed to prepare for the case, PREMIUM TIMES earlier **reported**.

The judge granted the agreed motion on August 3, the same day the parties filed it, saying the case "is so unusual and complex, due to the nature of the prosecution and the volume of discovery."

Therefore, "it would be unreasonable to expect adequate preparation for trial within the time limits," Mr Settle had said.